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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2920
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 6555
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 4327
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2940
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7498
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1554
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4892
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 1106
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//
INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 7230

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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/R/MR:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, AZAIBACK, AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA MDAVIDSON
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Syria/Lebanon, Syria/Iraq, Palestinian hostility (2/2-5)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers reported Indonesian FM Hassan Wirajuda's visit to Syria on Feb. 3 and 4 and his meetings with President Bashar al Assad and FM Walid al Mouallem. Wirajuda delivered a letter to President Assad from the Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono on means of enhancing bilateral relations between the two countries.

The press also underlined the foiling by Syrian customs of an attempt to smuggle weapons from Syria to Tripoli, in northern Lebanon. The guns were in a cache on an Iraq-registered truck heading for Lebanon via the Al-Arida border crossing, near Homs. The vehicle was registered in the restive Iraqi province of Al-Anbar, a Sunni bastion west of Baghdad.

The press reported the Lebanese opposition's intention to resume its protest on February 14, the second anniversary of the assassination of former Lebanese PM Rafik al Hariri.

Syrian papers also highlighted Russia's Foreign Minister's statement that Syria, Hamas and Iran are keys to any solution of the problems of the Middle East. Lavrov was quoted as saying that Russia's views about the Middle East differ from those of the U.S. He said that Russia refuses to isolate countries which the US doesn't like.

End of summary.

¶2. Selected Headlines:

"Lavrov: Syria, Iran and Hezbollah are keys for any solution"
(Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 2/5)

"The truck is Iraqi, destination is Lebanon: Syrian customs foils an attempt to smuggle weapons" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 2/5)

"The PA's obstinacy is due to its alignment with the US project"
(Government-owned Tishreen, 2/5)

"Mashaal: Dialogue is the solution; we are working to make the Mecca meeting a success" (Government-owned Tishreen, 2/5)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Excuse us Fatah; Excuse us Hamas"

Izzidin Darwish , an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (2/5): "This strange, anomalous inter-Palestinian fight cannot be justified by the adage that the results justify the means....

"Arabs and Palestinians understand that this hostility is Israeli made, and that those who rush to be involved in it are doing Israel a favor, at the expense of their national cause, and want to trade in Palestinian blood for personal and financial benefits.

"Israel has been greatly relieved by this fighting, and the extreme Israelis are rubbing their hands in joy. They do not spare any means that may make this fight longer. And the American neo-conservatives, who are endeavoring to create a new Middle East and eliminate the Palestinian cause, are finding what they seek in this Palestinian hostility, and they are working hard to fuel it, secretly and publicly, under the pretext of fighting terrorism....

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"It is evident that what makes my foe happy should concern me ... and (what is happening now) must be halted immediately, just because the Israeli enemy wants it."

"US policy in the Region: One Failure After Another"

Elias Murad, Chief editor of government-owned al-Ba'th, wrote (2/5): "No US president has managed to bring as much hatred to his country as President George W. Bush. He has united all the world's peoples in confrontation with his country. We thought that his State of the Union address this year would be different, but it just brought more tensions for the US people and the world's peoples.

"At a time when his administration was marking up one failure after another and one defeat after another, its members were on the front pages talking about imaginary triumphs.. ."

"The Democrats have said it clearly: what is going on now is nothing other than a threat to American national security. Why, then, does President Bush persist in sending his troops and exposing American national security to danger?

"Let us look around us, from Palestine to Lebanon to Iraq. Let us also consider the hidden parts of the new Bush strategy, the most catastrophic for the region with what it has in its caches of chaos, division, and rupture. They say this is their project, but where is our own project as Arabs?"

Corbin